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## Grimes—Carpenter

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# ANNALS OF IOWA.

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## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

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### GRIMES—CARPENTER.

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The leading article of this number of THE ANNALS is a very able, carefully-written study of the character and life-work of James W. Grimes—a man to whom history will assign a place in the front rank of American Statesmen—from the pen of Cyrus C. Carpenter, one of his successors as Governor of Iowa, who knew him intimately and well for many years. Gov. Carpenter writes with full knowledge of the subject, and in sincere appreciation of the man who was in a large sense his mentor, at his own entrance into public life. The article is a valuable one. It is a rare thing in the history of States, that any man has such a hold upon the masses of the people as Gov. Grimes possessed in the winter of 1857-8. The great issue raised by the slave power was before the country and he had fought it to the death so far as Iowa was concerned—in some of the most memorable and remarkable canvasses that ever took place west of the Mississippi. Mr. Carpenter had been chosen to the Iowa House of Representatives in the autumn of 1857, by a district composed of 19 counties in the northwestern corner of our State. This was the beginning of his long and honored public career. The writer at that time published the only paper in that great district which supported Carpenter—his competitor being John F. Duncombe, who has since risen to distinction as a leader in the Democratic party. This pioneer contest was conducted with energy and determination on both sides. It resulted in Carpenter's election by the small majority of not far from 125. The names before the voters for United States Senator were those of Gov. James W. Grimes, and Gen. Geo. W. Jones,

the then incumbent of the position. The newspaper referred to—THE FREEMAN, of Webster City—supported Grimes.

Prior to the last session of the State Legislature in Iowa City, which made the division, Webster County included the present county of Hamilton within its borders, as is shown by the old maps. At a previous election Webster County had voted to issue \$100,000 in bonds to aid in building a railroad, and it was reported that an effort would be made at the session of 1858 to apportion this sum between the two counties—a proposition peculiarly distasteful to the people of Hamilton.

The writer called the attention of Gov. Grimes to this matter, asking his aid in defeating the measure. The Governor replied in the following hitherto unpublished letter, which possesses much interest when read in connection with Gov. Carpenter's article :

DES MOINES, JAN. 29, 1858.

*My Dear Sir:*

Your favor of the 15th inst. came duly to hand.

I have thus far watched the proceedings of the Genl. Assembly, but up to this time no bill to legalize the issue of bonds by either Webster or Hamilton Counties has been introduced. No such bill even if enacted into a law would be of any avail. If the issue would be illegal without the law, it would be illegal with it. This question has just been decided by the Supreme Court in a case brought up from Lee County. By reference to the acts of last session you will see that a law was passed to legalize the issue of bonds by Lee and Davis Counties. I believed the law valueless and refused to sign it, but allowed it to take effect by retaining it in my hands three days. The question came up upon the validity of this legalizing act and it was held by the full bench to be wholly worthless.

I shall put some of our friends on their guard against such a measure if presented, though if passed, it cannot result to your disadvantage.

I suppose you have learned the result of the Senatorial election. I wish to thank you most sincerely for the kind expressions contained in your letter, and in the "Freeman," in relation to me personally, and I trust an opportunity at no distant day will be presented when I can in some degree reciprocate your kindness.

I am pleased to be able to say that your representative, Mr. Carpenter, occupies a very high position in the House and is an honor to his constituents.

I am, very truly, your friend,

JAMES W. GRIMES.

*Charles Aldrich, Esq., Webster City, Iowa.*

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